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Contact: Bill Brookreson, Department of Agriculture (360) 902-1810
Gary Larson, Attorney General's Office (360) 586-1883

UPDATE: IBP report sent to Walla Walla County prosecutor for review

OLYMPIA – A criminal investigative report on alleged animal cruelty and violations of the Humane Slaughter Act at a southeast Washington meatpacking plant today was forwarded to the Walla Walla County prosecuting attorney.

The action follows Gov. Gary Locke's request last June that an inter-agency team review slaughtering practices at the IBP plant in Wallula to determine if animal-cruelty, humane slaughter, worker-safety or food-safety violations may have occurred there.

The team includes the state Department of Agriculture, Washington State Patrol and state Department of Labor and Industries. The Walla Walla county prosecutor and the U.S. Department of Agriculture also participated. The state Attorney General's Office provided legal advice to the state agencies participating on the team. Any decision to prosecute lies with the local county prosecutor.

The State Patrol took the lead in investigating the criminal allegations and prepared the investigative report that was forwarded to Walla Walla County Prosecutor Jim Nagle. Its contents will not be released until Nagle decides what action, if any is appropriate.

Prosecuting Attorney Jim Nagle has indicated that he will be forwarding copies of the report to several other prosecutors in the state for review and input on what, if any, action should be taken. This is standard procedure for cases deemed to be sensitive in nature or of high profile.

Formation of the inter-agency team follows accusations by an animal-rights group that animals were being inhumanely slaughtered in the IBP plant. A graphic video depicting alleged animal cruelty was aired by a Seattle television station, prompting hundreds of citizens to request an investigation.

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